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TOUCHY SUBJECT By [ROSEANNE GERIN](#)

Beyond fingerprints

The future of biometrics is more than just fingerprint scanners -- that's the message the new director of the Defense Department's Biometrics Management Office wants to send to industry.

"We're looking for new technologies, innovators and companies that recognize that the biometrics enterprise in the Defense Department and the U.S. government in five years is going to be very different from what we have now," said Joseph Guzman, who was appointed BMO's acting director Aug. 1.

Guzman, 44, joined BMO in January as director of policy, planning and liaison. In his new position, he replaces John Woodward Jr., who had been the BMO's director since fall 2003.

The office consolidates and coordinates biometric technologies across the Defense Department. The agency uses biometric applications to support warfighters and provide computer-network access control and physical-access control to facilities.

By 2010, fingerprint scans will no longer be the predominant biometric technology, Guzman said. In response to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12, the department will employ a greater amount of biometrics for access control as well as information sharing. The office also is involved in developing standards to support information sharing, he said.

Guzman is charged with building up biometrics technologies and ingraining them into Defense Department operations, as well as bringing biometrics closer to the armed forces.

BMO runs the Biometric Fusion Center in Clarksburg, W.Va., to test and evaluate commercially available biometric technologies. Including the center, BMO has a \$28 million budget.

Earlier this year, for instance, BMO provided technical assistance for a pilot demonstration using biometrics for the Military Entrance Processing Command, which determines the physical, mental and moral qualifications of recruits.

Fingerprint scans were used to improve processing enlistees. Cross Match Technologies Inc. of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., supplied the digital fingerprint readers, and Daon Inc. of Reston, Va., was the project integrator.

BMO partially underwrote another project in 2003 at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, where hand-geometry readers were installed to control access to the base at its new rail station entrance.

The devices authenticate a person's identity using biometric technology to read the shape of a hand. They were used along with personal identification numbers to identify those who wanted to enter the base. Recognition Systems Inc. of Campbell, Calif., supplied the biometric readers, and Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. was the project integrator.

Now BMO's main challenge is to integrate the various biometrics the Defense Department uses, make them interoperable and make it easy for biometric data to be collected and shared, Guzman said.

"To optimize the use of the biometrics infrastructure that we have, we really need to refine and develop the information-sharing arrangements within the Defense Department, and also across to other agencies within the U.S. government," Guzman said.